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C O N F I D E N T I A L TBILISI 001472

SIPDIS

DEPARTMENT FOR DAS BRYZA AND EUR/CARC

E.O. 12958: DECL: 08/25/2018

TAGS: [PGOV](#) [PREL](#) [GG](#)

SUBJECT: TFGG01: GEORGIA: REQUEST FOR STRONG WESTERN
CONDEMNATION OF RUSSIAN RECOGNITION OF SOUTH OSSETIA AND
ABKHAZIA

Classified By: AMBASSADOR JOHN F. TEFFT. REASONS: 1.4 (B) AND (D).

¶1. (C) Georgian DFM Vashadze called in the German, French, UK and U.S. Ambassadors August 26. Although the meeting was called initially for the MFA to present a non-paper (faxed to EUR/CARC) regarding principles and objectives for resolution of the conflict, President Medvedev's announcement that Russia would recognize South Ossetia and Abkhazia became the topic. Vashadze said that the recognition meant that we were entering into a "new Cold war" and that Georgia had taken steps to sever diplomatic ties and abrogate all diplomatic agreements with Russia. Georgia would now concentrate on "reconstructing the country" and waiting until Russia slept again. Vashadze noted that although the news was sad, it was clear that the Russians were on their way to marginalizing themselves from the international community and that their approach to the region of the last 16 years was over. He predicted that for Russia, Georgia was "just the beginning -- Plan B and C are coming next."

¶2. (C) Vashadze said that he had two requests -- first, that the West move quickly to provide legal and moral support to Georgia, and if economic sanctions were added, it would be even better. Second, Vashadze asked that Georgia and the West agree on a united stand in opposing this Russian recognition. According to Vashadze, Georgia now needed to deal with securing its own "37th parallel" around the separatist areas. At least the Russian recognition had shown that this was a conflict involving Russia -- the de facto governments were just a smokescreen. Georgia also needed to concentrate on getting Russian troops out of Georgia proper as well as taking care of "victims of ethnic cleansing." Vashadze said that Georgia would not take any rash military steps against Russia -- "we are a nation of 4 million people and 28,000 soldiers, but we are not suicidal." In Vashadze's view, Russia's decision means that it wants only enemies or satellites on its borders.

¶3. (C) Allied reaction was limited since all were waiting for guidance from capitals, but all expected strong statements soon. DCM, attending for the Ambassador, along with the German and UK Ambassadors, urged Georgia to continue to be patient and not take any rash actions in response to the Russian announcement. The French DCM noted that Paris planned to issue a tough EU statement at 1700 Paris time. The MFA has summoned EU Ambassadors to the MFA at 2000 to discuss next steps.

¶4. (SBU) After the meeting, the MFA contacted the Embassy to report that South Ossetians in the town of Megvrekisi near Tskhinvali were beginning to expel ethnic Georgians from the town. The MFA reported that a similar action was expected in Akhagori, an ethnic Georgian village at the extreme eastern end of South Ossetia where a stand-off between South Ossetian forces and Georgian police had been taking place. According to the MFA, Georgian police were retreating from the edge of the village in order to avoid conflict.

TEFFT